

## Editorial

Source: Mountain Research and Development, 24(3) : 191

Published By: International Mountain Society

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1659/mrd.2403>

---

The BioOne Digital Library (<https://bioone.org/>) provides worldwide distribution for more than 580 journals and eBooks from BioOne's community of over 150 nonprofit societies, research institutions, and university presses in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences. The BioOne Digital Library encompasses the flagship aggregation BioOne Complete (<https://bioone.org/subscribe>), the BioOne Complete Archive (<https://bioone.org/archive>), and the BioOne eBooks program offerings ESA eBook Collection (<https://bioone.org/esa-ebooks>) and CSIRO Publishing BioSelect Collection (<https://bioone.org/csiro-ebooks>).

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Digital Library, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at [www.bioone.org/terms-of-use](http://www.bioone.org/terms-of-use).

Usage of BioOne Digital Library content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non-commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

---

BioOne is an innovative nonprofit that sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

*Dear Readers,*

*When speaking of mountains and mountain people, we usually think of rural populations and rarely address the issue of urbanization, with all of its opportunities and risks. This, however, is a one-sided perspective. Urbanization can be understood as an increase in the urban character of a geographical area. It is a process that has profound ecological, socio-cultural and economic impacts. Urban areas are becoming increasingly important, especially in Andean countries, where the proportion of people living in such areas is high (Bolivia 62.9 %, Ecuador 63.4 %), as opposed to African or Asian mountain countries, where it is significantly lower (Ethiopia 15.9 %, Nepal 12.2 %, Myanmar 28.2 %). But the trends are similar in both regions: urban areas are growing, and rural areas are being urbanized.*

*This issue of MRD illustrates some of the typical problems of urbanization in mountain regions. The Development section deals with expansion into fragile or even high risk zones, with accompanying social transformations (Colombia); uncontrolled growth with negative environmental and social impacts (Chile); impacts aggravated by economic opportunity (Costa Rica); and frequently unplanned and unmanaged urbanization (Costa Rica, China). An approach to controlling urbanization in a participatory way in order to avoid environmental and social problems is illustrated in the Kenya Rift Valley. The final article presents an analysis of development paths in the European Alps and a thought-provoking thesis on the future functions of mountain towns that could also be of interest to towns in developing countries trying to move towards more sustainable models of urbanization in mountains.*

*The Research section also demonstrates the impact of trends in urbanization, through examples that focus on migration and urbanization in Ladakh, and rural employment in China. The MountainNotes section features a contribution that addresses rural tourism in a metropolitan area of China.*

*Finally, we should not forget that urbanization also presents opportunities. These include better educational infrastructure, integration into markets, off-farm income opportunities, political demarginalization, and reduced pressure on fragile rural areas due to migration, among other things. We encourage our readers to keep these important themes in mind as you examine this issue of MRD.*

*Hans Hurni, Editor-in-Chief*

*Anne Zimmermann, Assistant Editor*